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COMPT 88-1883

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28 November 1988

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director of Information Technology

FROM: Leo Hazlewood  
Comptroller

SUBJECT: Reactions to the BARS System

In case you have missed the recent increase in the noise level, the attached submission to OFM's newsletter documents difficulties that budget and finance officers are having with the new Agency financial system in preparing materials for the FY 1990-91 budget. I realize that in part this is the Office of Financial Management's problem, but we seem to have designed a system that simply does not meet the requirements. Something has to be done.

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Leo Hazlewood

Attachment:  
As stated

cc: D/OFM

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My Life as a RAT\*  
(RAT = Reluctant ABF Tradionalist)

For the 1989 OMB budget exercise, CIA budget officers were moved into a world of new systems with the unique opportunity to choose the system to support their requirements. (This is somewhat of an overstatement. One could choose OBF if an IBM PC was available.) I elected OBF rather than ABF and thus began my tenure as a RAT.

Since the election was mine, why would I want to be a RAT? Well, OBF moved me away from the old fashioned world of green spread sheets, dull pencil points, and calculators. It moved me into the world of real automation. I envisioned that less time would be spent on pure mathematical functions. I could devote more time to analysis of the budget and submit a budget officer's dream - a perfect submission! It was the option that made sense. Unfortunately, I overlooked my twelve years of experience working with new CIA financial systems.

With ignorant bliss, I proceeded with my plans to become a devoted RAT. My staff eagerly grasped this enthusiasm and quickly became even more devout RATS than I. We computed our 89 Program submission on OBF. We went very slowly and asked many questions, but we successfully completed the process. We really understood how OBF worked. This was confirmed when we completed the 89 OMB submission with OBF without the assistance of our friendly RAT experts from Headquarters. After spending the entire week-end getting to this point, I proudly called our RAT experts on Monday morning to notify them that we were ready for our first upload to the mainframe. We wanted to be first (that shows that we were very novice RATS!) and we were.

Well, that phone call was the beginning of a long week. First, the software in our PC had not been updated for the current upload procedures. That was an easy fix, but then we learned that the mainframe software had not been modified to the new upload procedures. We had to wait. (Some RAT experts were physically threatened when this was revealed.) Tuesday there was no change to the situation. Wednesday we finally received the good news that we could upload. We RATS were thrilled. On Thursday morning we eagerly printed ABF reports to continue our work after a three day loss. Can you imagine our disappointment to discover that the upload had not taken place? I was a bit angry.

Well, the RAT experts felt really bad, too. They arranged for a partial upload of our data. We were able to run reports to check our data, but lost yet another day since we could not make any adjustments. Four and a half days work lost but, of course, our deadline for submission remained unchanged. Offices suffer when the system support doesn't work.

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And yet, we RATS are a bit stubborn. We eagerly faced the 89 Congressional budget exercise with our OBF system. Our RAT experts knew what the problems were. They would take care of us. Remember, the system itself did everything it was advertised to do. There was just one little problem - the upload - and surely that would be corrected during the next exercise.

Well, during the 89 Congressional we started to learn that RATS take a lot of garbage. We found that our RAT experts had changed the OFB software to compute benefits. It wasn't broken, they "fixed" it, and suddenly it was broken. We went backwards in time. We had to get green spreadsheets and dull pencils and compute this manually. Of course, we had to manually input the correct figures, too. The RATS on my staff were in culture shock. They'd adapted too quickly to automation. They did not digress well. But they remained stubborn RATS and continued with the OBF process.

Once again we faced the upload. Again it didn't work. (Sorry, memory fails me as to the exact reason of this failure.) Again we had a partial upload. But things were improving - we only lost one day due to upload (plus the extra time it took us to do the manual calculations, of course). This happened on the Saturday of a three day week-end. On Sunday six RATS reported to duty to make adjustments to OBF and begin to work on schedules. After making our adjustments, we patiently awaited our reports. ABF reports aren't always quick to be printed. After a great deal of patience, we finally called to ask if there was a problem. The print line in our building had been turned off! I was mad!

Well, during the short interval between the 89 Congressional budget and the 90 Program budget, I changed jobs. When I moved to the Planning and Resources Staff of the Directorate of Science and Technology, I had two offices full of RATS like myself. This meant that my life as a RAT was full of double trouble.

It was during this 90 Program exercise that we discovered that an individual must have a special access to perform the upload function. No one had ever told us RATS. It turns out that "someone" had simply identified "someone" in each office to have this access. If you were lucky, that "someone" with the access was the same "someone" who attempted the upload. Unfortunately, one of my offices had the excellent idea that more than one person in the office should be familiar with the upload process. Do you get the idea? Once again their upload failed and the traditional day was lost in uploading.

The RAT experts invited the RAT users to a meeting to discuss our problems. That was a great idea and a useful experience. Our experts fixed the benefits problem. We were assured that all would be well for upload.

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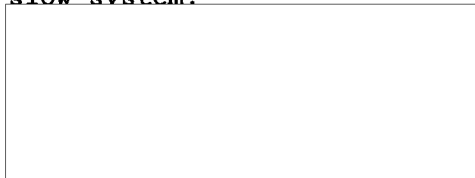
Well, RATS will be RATS. We moved on to the 90 OMB submission. One of my RAT offices discovered that a non-RAT had used their PC. Some important software details were deleted. Our friendly expert RATS quickly went to the rescue to restore this information. Unfortunately, they forgot that my other office had called and made arrangements for one of their RATS to come to Headquarters to do an upload. This RAT had to sit patiently and wait. Guess what - this RAT didn't have access to upload. Does this sound familiar?

Well, now we're in the middle of the 90 Congressional budget and I have a headache. I made a special point of visiting our RAT experts to warn them about upload. They were (at that time) optimistic RATS and assured me that everything would be perfect. That was their inexperience showing. (They're no longer inexperienced and can now qualify as true RATS.) It started with a revision to the PC software on the upload. Our RAT experts forgot to load this into the PC of one of my RAT offices. That's okay. It was quickly remedied.

On Wednesday one of my RAT offices was ready to upload. They were told that there was a problem that may affect the upload. They patiently waited and finally received the okay to proceed with the upload. On Thursday they followed the routine of learning that the upload didn't work. The problem was finally identified. Our RAT experts had been prepared for problems and had kept the upload disks. They volunteered to do the second upload. This was really smart since my RATS aren't located here at Headquarters. Well, the RAT experts found that they did not have the accesses necessary to perform this function for the offices. So, my RATS made another trip to Headquarters.

That was just the beginning. When our RAT experts checked our data later in the day, they discovered that another offices files had gotten into my RATS files. WOW! That's supposed to be impossible. Our RAT experts called my RAT who'd uploaded but she was gone for the day. The other RAT took over to try to get the upload done. The experts asked if my two RATS were on the same mini-disk. She said yes. That was the wrong answer. How many RATS know about mini-disks? None of mine. Well, the good news was that the upload worked. The bad news is that the wrong data was uploaded. Will it never end?

Today I'm faced with one office of RATS who've lost three days and one office of RATS who are attempting their first upload tonight. I'm afraid that you're only reading the beginning of my problems as a RAT during this 90 Congressional budget. You're probably wondering why we aren't doing what smart RATS do - jump ship. Well, just consider what we'd be jumping to - ABF. Would you ABF users really recommend that slow system?



O/D/OIT Routing SlipDate 01 DEC 1988

<u>Action</u>	<u>Info</u>	<u>Seen</u>
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DD		
EXO		
Nancy		
Rose		
Mary		
C/CSG		
C/DG		
C/EG		
C/MG		
C/OG		
D/CSPO		
SADE		
C/A&TPS		
C/TSS		

COMMENT:

Info copies: D/OIT, DD/OIT, /done  
 C/COG, C/DSG, C/MSG /rd  
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